

## **BOSTON HEALTHY HOMES PARTNERSHIP**

**Boston Public Health Commission**

**Year of Grant: 1999**

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The Boston Medical Center is submitting this proposal on behalf of the Boston Public Health Commission, in collaboration with the Boston Department of Neighborhood Development and a coalition of community organizations and groups. The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) is a model of innovation in the area of community-based services, health education, prevention, and health promotion, and is home to the Office of Environmental Health, an important player in the area of urban housing assessment and remediation in Boston. The strength of this application is reflected in the breadth of knowledge and services that the entities comprising the applicant team bring to this initiative, coupled with the BPHC's experience in coordinating their efforts. Each team member brings resources and expertise that support the complex goal of assessing whether health improvements are achieved when structural modifications targeted to reducing environmental hazards in the home are added to standard public health interventions. In addition to the services and expertise represented by team members, they also have a proven track record in working together on a city wide basis to coordinate and deliver services, including the ability to collaborate with community-based organizations.

Funding from HUD's Healthy Homes Initiative will enable housing, public health and medical experts in Boston to develop and implement a coordinated, protocol-driven home assessment and remediation program, entitled The Boston Healthy Homes Partnership. Specific outcomes will be evaluated to determine whether moderate cost structural repairs to homes ("enhanced" group of interventions) result in greater improvement in children's health status than the "standard" package of lower cost public health interventions.

The applicant team has gained considerable experience in the intricacies of designing, developing, implementing and evaluating collaborative initiatives to assess and remediate environmental health hazards in the home. Boston has received several HUD grants for lead hazard control including a grant in 1994 that included a comprehensive evaluation component. BPHC took the lead in participating in the national study that has provided significant data on the effectiveness of **lead abatement** intervention strategies. In 1998 Centers for Disease Control awarded funding to support the Asthma, Lead and Injury Prevention by Home Remediation, known as the Healthy Homes Project, demonstration project. Several current key team members are actively involved in these projects and the experience they have gained from these efforts will inform this initiative. While studying the effects of home environmental interventions, the Boston Healthy Homes Partnership will also build lasting capacity in the community by utilizing a local skill-building organization that trains inner city youth to perform household repair work, to develop their own businesses, and to provide the service at below-market rates. The project's ultimate goal is to reduce asthma exacerbation, lead poisoning and home injuries in children by means of the following components:

A community education campaign, conceptualized and conducted by organizations with strong community ties and credibility in the targeted neighborhoods, will promote public awareness of the health risks of certain household environmental conditions, while also laying the groundwork for recruiting study subjects and forming alliances with property owners;

- A home assessment and remediation initiative, guided by a proven protocol that emphasizes efficiency, coordination, and comprehensiveness while minimizing disruption and intrusiveness, will be adapted in collaboration with several experienced community groups. Components of the protocol include: 1) A thorough assessment of the home environment to identify asthma, lead and injury risk factors; 2) Family education regarding hazards, remediation and abatement techniques and procedures; 3) Education and recruitment of property owners; 4) Remediation activities; and 5) Follow up over a 12-month period to assess health impact of remediation efforts.

- Creation of a model that uses the results of medical and home assessments to prioritize the structural changes made to a home.

A project evaluation will be conducted to compare the outcomes and cost effectiveness of standard public health interventions with the enhanced package that includes moderate structural remediation.